

OPERATIONS BULLETIN #38

Subject: Use of OES Water Tenders

The purpose of this bulletin is to outline the basic procedures for the operations of OES Fire Service Water Tenders. Review Fire and Rescue Branch Operations Bulletin #7, "Use of OES Fire and Rescue Apparatus – Major Mutual Aid Emergencies" (rev 4/02) for additional applicable information

Overview OES Water Tenders are specially designed water trucks built to provide water for fire fighting purposes. Water tenders are frequently used in rural and urban/interface areas. These areas often lack sufficient water system infrastructure to adequately support fire engine operations during emergency activities. OES, and other fire service water tenders are not the same as conventional water trucks, such as those used by road departments and construction companies. OES Water Tenders are built with a 500 GPM PTO pump, Class A Foam System, 2000 gallon stainless steel tank, specially designed tool compartments, appropriate tool inventory, communication system, a 10" rear quick dump, warning and scene lights, built-in SCBA tubes, etc.

Appropriate Uses of OES Water Tenders Fire Service Water Tenders play an important all-risk, civil defense and general disaster mitigation role. Not only are water tenders necessary in support of firefighting operations in rural wildland environments, they also support other critical fire suppression needs of incidents requiring a portable or enhanced water supply. Examples would include dump fires, hay fires, etc. Other public safety incidents involving non-fire emergencies include providing urgently needed water supplies (non-potable) following earthquakes and floods as well as in providing hazardous materials personnel/equipment decontamination, etc.

Inappropriate Uses of OES Water Tenders As previously indicated OES Water Tenders are designed specifically for fire service applications. They are not to be used for standard water truck assignments, such as road watering, supplying Incident Base shower units, etc. Conventional water trucks should be used in these types of situations to leave the OES Water Tenders available for emergency use through the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System.

Staffing The Water Tender will be staffed with two qualified driver/operators whenever the apparatus is dispatched. It is reasonable to assume that OES Water Tenders will receive frequent, multi-day assignments away from their home quarters. Replacement or rotation of personnel will be coordinated by OES, using guidelines outlined in appropriate existing Inter-agency Agreements.

Dispatching All movement of OES Water Tenders will be through the official dispatching channels, Dispatchers will recognize and act on all official requests for movement of the apparatus in conformance with the California Fire and Rescue Mutual Aid System.

OES Water Tenders should be dispatched as single increments. They are not to be substituted for an engine. They are not meant as a replacement initial attack unit. OES Engine Strike Teams will continue to be dispatched meeting ICS Strike Team standards. OES Task Forces may be put together for response, by combining any remaining OES units (both engines and water tenders) into an established ICS Task Force configuration.

The water tender driver/operator(s) will be responsible to have all necessary dispatch information, including order and request numbers, destination, travel route, radio frequencies, and all other identified points of contact, etc., prior to responding.